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ABSTRACT

School restructuring, or school-based management, is one of the most widely discussed educational reform movements. School restructuring improves education by giving teachers and principals more independence and responsibility in the educational process. The accelerated-schools process provides a means for school restructuring, emphasizing unity of purpose, empowerment, and building on strengths to move at-risk students forward. This paper examines the change process that occurred in four elementary schools in the South and Southwest that moved from a conventional mode of school organization to a participatory mode by implementing the accredited schools model. The paper focuses especially on the interactions between the role of the central district office and the school in the accelerated schools process. The schools were located in urban areas and had high percentages of low-income, minority students. The study utilized the case study method involving an assortment of research strategies, including interviews, observation, document reviews, and surveys. Questions solicited information about the status of the school before restructuring as well as about factors that influence the change process. Most of the schools had a traditional top-down relationship with their central offices before they began the accelerated schools process. Several factors influenced change in the role of the central office: principal and teacher role changes, curriculum and teaching changes, and assistance from a university. Overall, district offices had little influence on school restructuring, but among those that did, support for site-based management lessened barriers to change. Schools fundamentally changed even without direct district facilitation or support. (JPT)

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The Influence of the Central Office on School Restructuring: A Study of Selected Accelerated Schools

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association in Austin, TX, January 30, 1993.

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Abstract

This paper examines the change process that occurred in four elementary schools that moved from a conventional mode of school organization to a participatory mode of school organization by implementing the accelerated schools model. The paper focuses on the interactions between the central office and the school in the restructuring process. The analysis indicates that 1) When districts emphasized site-based management, there were fewer obstacles for schools who were involved in the restructuring process; 2) central offices did little to facilitate the restructuring process, even in districts that emphasized site-based management; and 3) schools were capable of making fundamental changes even without direct district facilitation or support.

The accelerated schools process provides a systematic approach to the restructuring of schools that serve predominately educationally at-risk students. The focus of this paper is on the interactions between the central office and the school in the restructuring process. The paper has four parts: 1) background on the role of central office and the accelerated schools process; 2) the research approach used in this study; 3) an analysis of the changes in the role of central office and the factors that influenced these changes in the four schools; and 4) conclusions and implications.

BACKGROUND

The first wave of school reform, which began in the early 1980s, emphasized top-down strategies for promoting excellence. Most reforms initiated by federal agencies, states, and school central offices (or school district offices) during this period assumed that school quality, as measured by test scores, could be influenced by top-down actions. Unfortunately, this assumption was often incorrect. The second wave of reform, which gained momentum in the late 1980s, emphasized school-based initiatives. These initiatives often assumed that schools have the power to change themselves and that central offices will not be an unsurmountable hinderance to bottom-up change. Thus, there is a great need to build knowledge about the interactions between schools and central offices as the school restructuring movement continues to take shape.

The Role of Central Office

As we move into the 21st century, school restructuring [variously referred to as school-based management, decentralization, school-site budgeting, and site-based management] "is one of today's most widely discussed educational reforms" (Hill, Bonan, & Warner, 1992, p. 21). David (1989) notes that, "Current interest is a response to evidence that our educational system is not working, and in particular, that strong central control actually diminishes teachers' morale, and correspondingly, their level of effort" (p. 45).

David (1989) further states that "The growing number of districts 'restructuring' their schools, as well as commentary from the National Governors' Association, both national teachers' unions, and corporate leaders--all make reference to some form of increased school autonomy" (p. 45). Much like the movement toward participatory management in business, the purpose of school restructuring is to improve performance by making those closest to the delivery of services--teachers and principals--more independent and more responsible for the results of their schools' operations (Goodlad, 1984; Carnegie Forum, 1986). Hill, et al. (1992) explain that, "This change involves shifting the initiative in public education from school boards, superintendents, and central administrative offices to individual schools" (p. 21).

School restructuring has a broader scope than school improvement programs (Mitchell, 1990; Hill, et al., 1992); "...it represents a change in how the district operates--how authority and

responsibility are shared between the district and its schools" (David, 1989, p. 46). As Hill, et al., (1992) states, "Schools cannot change their established modes of operation if all the expectations and controls of a centralized system remain intact" (p. 22). School restructuring changes the roles and responsibilities within the school and also has implications for the organization structure of the central office including the size and roles of its staff (Elmore, 1988). Thus, school restructuring requires a change in the role of the central office. The backbone of this change is the delegation of authority from central office to schools.

Accelerated Schools

The accelerated schools movement provides a methodology for such fundamental change and school restructuring. Accelerated schools emphasize acceleration rather than remediation for the at-risk student. Developed by Henry M. Levin, Professor of Economics and Education at Stanford University, the model provides a well defined set of principles that, in combination, would fundamentally change the operation of the school if they were implemented.

The accelerated schools process involves school staffs in building a unity of purpose, undertaking responsibility for decision making and the consequences of those decisions, and ultimately, transforming curriculum and instructional processes to build on the strength of teachers, students, parents, and the community (Levin, 1987). Accelerated schools emphasize speeding up, rather than slowing down, the progress of educationally at-risk

students. The goal of the schools is to close the achievement gap by the end of the elementary school experience, which according to the literature on accelerated schools, involves a fundamental change, or transformation, in the organization of the school. Central offices clearly have a role in this transformation process which has not been fully explored in the literature.

The transformation of a conventional school into an accelerated school involves its restructuring around the three guiding principles of the model--unity of purpose, empowerment, and building on strengths (Levin, 1987, 1988). Through these principles, a pedagogy evolves which transforms the learning environment.

Unity of purpose involves the development of a clear vision of the organizational and instructional framework required to bring students into the mainstream of education. The school's vision embodies the unified efforts of parents, teachers, and students around the realization of their common goals and endeavors.

Empowerment coupled with responsibility refers to an acknowledgment of parents', teachers', and students' capacity and willingness to take responsibility for the educational processes. This involves identifying needs, making decisions about how to address them, and accepting ownership of outcomes. One of the building blocks of the accelerated schools model is the expanded role of all groups to participate in, and take responsibility for, the educational process and educational results. In accelerated

schools, administrative roles are redefined to include input from parents, teachers, and students.

Building on strengths is a continual process of identifying and utilizing all available human resources within the school and its community. In this process the opportunities for maximal parent, student, teacher, and administrator demonstration of individual talents is crucial.

The accelerated schools process is a three-stage transition from a conventional school structure, to a new structure openly chosen by the school community. First, members of the school community (administrators, teachers, parents, and students), take stock of the school as it is currently structured and develop a vision of the school as it might be. Second, the school community assesses the gaps between the present conditions in the school and their vision of the school, and develops a set of priorities to guide the restructuring process. Finally, the school restructures into cadres, i.e. working groups with teachers, parents, and other members of the school community, that initiate inquiry processes aimed at addressing the priority area. The cadres form the basic working units in the restructuring processes. Their work is coordinated by a steering committee, composed of the principal, cadre leaders, aides, other school staff, students, parents, and a central office representative/s. And most major decisions are made by the school as a whole.

RESEARCH APPROACH

All four of the schools used in the study were into the restructuring process at the time of the site visits in Spring 1991. Three of the schools visited were nearing completion of their first year of the process, and entering the inquiry (or implementation) stage. The fourth school was ending its second year and had one year experience with the new environment.

The case study research method was used for this study. Case study research involves an assortment of research methodologies, including interviews, direct observations, document reviews, archival records, participant observation, and surveys. The specific approaches used to collect and analyze information on the four schools is discussed below.

Data Sources

Institutional documents were collected and analyzed. Documents such as test scores, attendance records, parental involvement and attendance at meetings, memoranda, administrative documents, grant applications, vision statements, surveys, and brainstorming papers were utilized in the change process. These documents were also examined in the case study.

Direct interviews were conducted at each school site, including teachers, administrators (principals and assistant principals), and others (e.g. social workers and parents). The principal of each of the schools was consulted to identify the parents and teachers to be interviewed. An attempt was made to talk to people who both supported and resisted the change process.

An interview guide used for the study asked questions about: a) The status of each school before the implementation of the accelerated schools concept or change process; b) the status of the school at the time of the interviews; and c) the factors that facilitated or inhibited change in the schools. A total of 35 people were interviewed for the study.

The questions solicited information about the status of the school before the restructuring process and at the time of the site visit, as well as about factors that influence the change process. Questions about histories and current status of the school considered five dimensions: a) relations with the central office; b) the role of the principal; c) the role of teachers; d) the role of parents and the community; and e) pedagogical processes in the school. This paper focuses on the interactions between central office and the school in the restructuring process. However, changes in all of the factors have been analyzed (Davidson, 1992) and will be discussed, as they pertain to the topics of the paper.

Field notes were taken during the interviews and most of the interviews were taped. After each interview, a written record was made of each session, using a method recommended by Lofland and Lofland (1984). These records contained: a) Summaries and notes of what was said; b) recorded transcription of important responses, c) notes on methodology, and d) personal emotional experiences. Each taped interview was typed verbatim and the transcript was sent to the interviewee for review and verification of facts. In the case of the few interviews that were not taped, due to technical

difficulties, the transcript was typed from the field notes and sent to each interviewee for review and verification of facts.

Case studies were developed and analyzed for each of the schools (Davidson, 1992). The names of the schools and interviewees were changed in order to disguise the real identities. Names were disguised to assure openness. Disguising was also important because the analyses critically examined the extent of change in each school and the reasons why change occurred.

Analysis Methods

Two analysis methods were used. First, a continuum was developed to assess the extent of change in the role of central office. One side of the continuum (the left) represented the characteristics of the traditional mode of school organization: Relationships with central office were primarily top-down focusing on control and regulations. The other side of the continuum (the right) represented the extreme characteristics of the accelerated schools model: Relationships with central office was based on an exchange of information and school-based decision-making. Each side of the continuum was further divided into "extreme" and "moderate," indicating degree of the characteristics on either end of the continuum. The middle quatrain of each continuum was considered neutral. For example, the extreme left quatrain would assume virtually all the characteristics of the top-down mode.

Judgments were made about quatrains on the continuum based on the following criteria:

1. Were there actions taken by the schools to facilitate a change in the role of the central office?

2. Did the central office allow the school community to make changes in the area of curriculum and instruction that would enable the school to better meet the needs of the students?

3. Did the central office implement policies that encouraged the schools to become involved in decision making and site-based management?

These questions were used to assess the place a school fell on each continuum. The status of the school was assessed at two points: 1) before the accelerated schools process, and 2) at the time of the site visits. Judgments were made based on the responses of teachers that had been members of the faculty prior to the adoption of the process. The continuum was used to assess the extent of change in the role of central office based on teachers recollections. Interview results are presented to illustrate the judgments used to place schools on the continuum.

Second, analyses of other factors included in the full study (Davidson, 1992) are reexamined here to determine which factors influenced change in the role of central office in these schools. The other four factors were analyzed using a similar methodology to the one developed for central office. The results of these other analyses are only discussed as they pertain to changes in the role of central office.

ANALYSIS

This analysis focuses on change in the role of the central office in the four accelerated schools. The analysis is presented in four parts: 1) overview of the schools; 2) the initial role of central office; 3) the current role of central office, focusing on the extent of change; and 4) factors influencing change.

Each of the schools is located in an urban public school system in the South or Southwest sections of the United States. Two are located in the same large urban district (Griswald and McBride Schools); one in a medium-sized urban district in the same Southern state (Forest School); and one in a suburban district adjacent to another large urban center in a Southwestern state (Cedarcrest School).

The Schools

Three schools--Forest, Griswald, and McBride--were in the initial phase of implementing the accelerated schools concept. There were selected because the researcher had the opportunity to study them as part of the University of New Orleans Accelerated Schools Project. One of the schools (Cedarcrest) was selected because it was considered an exemplary accelerated school by national experts. It was completing the second year of the process.

Cedarcrest Elementary School is part of the Alamo Heights Independent School District in a large metropolitan city in the Southwest section of the United States. The majority of the district is made up of middle to upper class families. Alamo

Heights has a reputation of being a private school district for upper class, anglo children. Cedarcrest School is separated from the other schools in this affluent district by a railroad track and a freeway, or in the words of the current Principal, "...a double barrier." At the time Cedarcrest was constructed, the neighborhood consisted of middle class homes with an enrollment of 99% white and 01% Hispanic.

The demographics of Cedarcrest changed when the large, tree covered area in front of the school was converted into a vast apartment complex thus increasing the number of school age children living in the Cedarcrest district. Due to age and deterioration, the apartments have become government-subsidized, low income housing. More than 90% of the students in these complexes come from Hispanic immigrant families. More than 91% of the students are on the free or reduced lunch and breakfast program at school. Spanish is the first language for most of the families living in the complexes and many students enter school speaking no English. The students were performing in the bottom 25th percentile on district administered standardized tests.

Allison Agnew became Principal of Cedarcrest Elementary School in the Fall of 1988. She became interested in the accelerated schools model after reading an article by Henry M. Levin, Professor of Education and Economics at Stanford University. Ms. Agnew shared the information with the members of her teaching staff in the Spring of 1989. Prior to the opening of the 1989-1990 school year, the teachers voted to implement the project.

The student population of Cedarcrest for the 1990-1991 school year was 989. The faculty consisted of 70 teachers, two Assistant Principals, and a Principal. The ethnic breakdown of the student body was 78% Hispanic, 11% white, 5% black, 5% Asian, and 1% others.

Forest Elementary School was built in 1955 in the architectural style of the period. A member of the Tanglewood Independent School District, Forest is located in a large metropolitan city in the Southern region of the United States. The school community consists of single family residences, the majority with incomes below the poverty level. Ninety-eight percent of the student body participated in the free or reduced lunch program for the 1990-1991 school year. During the same school year, Forest had a population of 401 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade with a faculty of 20 teachers, a principal, a secretary, 13 ancillary teachers, eight aides, five cafeteria employees, and three janitorial workers. Racially, the school population consisted of all black students with the exception of 10 white children.

Marilyn Hasie became Principal of Forest Elementary School in 1983. Forest, like Cedarcrest, implemented the accelerated schools concept on its own initiative. A member of the Advisory Council of Forest School introduced the Council to the project through a brochure published by the Stanford University Accelerated Schools Project. On May 23, 1990, the Council voted to implement the accelerated schools concept at Forest. Two of the Chapter 1

teachers assigned to Forest were instructed to write a grant to fund the project. The grant was funded and Forest began executing the project in the Fall of 1990. Thus, in the initial phase of implementing the accelerated schools process, Forest Elementary School was selected for the present study.

Griswald Elementary School and McBride Elementary School were selected by a Committee to participate in the accelerated schools project. The Committee consisted of three professors from the College of Education's Leadership and Foundations Department at the University of New Orleans and members of a large urban public school system. These two schools began the initial phase in the Fall of 1990 and were also selected for the present study.

Dedication ceremonies were held on February 15, 1939, for the building that currently houses Griswald Elementary School. The school is located in the inner or metro section of a large metropolitan city in the Southern part of the United States. The community consists of single family residences with incomes that fall in the low income bracket. The student population of Griswald, for the 1990-1991 school year, was 320 with a faculty of 24 teachers and a Principal. The ethnic background of the student population was 100% black. Grades pre-kindergarten through sixth are taught in the school. In the Fall of 1989, William Brewer became Principal of Griswald School.

John P. McBride Elementary School, a member of the Lake View Independent School District, is situated on a 7.15 acre site in a suburban area of a large metropolitan city in the Southern region

of this country and opened its doors in 1959. The setting of the school provides for an unusual degree of quiet and privacy and is compatible with house designs in the area. Homes in the area are primarily privately-owned, single-family dwellings. For the 1990-1991 school year, the enrollment of McBride School was 406 in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth. Of these, 60% qualified for free lunch, 12% received reduced priced lunch, and 28% paid the full price for lunch. The ethnic composition of the student body was 99.09% black and .01% white. The faculty consisted of a Principal, a secretary, 15 regular classroom teachers, nine Special Education teachers, nine support personnel, six paraprofessionals, and nine custodial and lunchroom personnel. Ruth Oliver became the Principal of McBride School in the Fall of 1980.

The Initial State of the Schools

McBride and Griswald are members of the same school district. The central office of this school system exhibited characteristics that justified placement of both schools in the extreme quatrain on the left side of the continuum. Decisions from the budget to the curriculum were made at the district level for all schools in the Lake View Independent School District. Each school was expected to implement these decisions. As one of the teachers at Griswald recalled, "...everything was more or less...set forth in a way in accordance with policy, Lake View Independent School District."

Forest is part of the Tanglewood Independent School District. Two decisions made by this school district before the adoption of the Accelerated Schools process influenced placement in the neutral

quatrain. By federal mandate, the Tanglewood School District was ordered to improve the racial mix of students in some of the schools. In compliance with this federal mandate, the district designed a program, Partners in Education, for 43 schools. The first step in the redesign plan was the creation of an Advisory Council in each school. The Council consisted of members of the school community, the business community, and the central office. The charge of the Council was to offer recommendations to enhance and support the positive academic growth of the school.

Each school was required to develop and implement an enhancement program depending on the needs and interests of the school as the second step in the redesign plan. An enhancement program, such as computer science, was added to each school in order to attract students from outside the boundary of the individual schools. Transportation was provided for students participating in the program. The Advisory Council voted to implement the accelerated schools process as the program enhancement for Forest Elementary School. Rhonda Dwight, an Academic Readiness teacher and President of the Advisory Council stated, "The Advisory Council was set up so you could bring in the community, the parents, the teachers. Decision making. It is shared decision making." In conclusion, these changes represented a shift from the top-down, authoritarian management approach to a more bottom-up, participatory management approach.

Cedarcrest is a member of the Alamo Heights Independent School District. The District, prior to 1988, utilized the top-down style

of management. As Marjorie Morehead remembered, "...the leadership in the administration building was very traditional." About the time Cedarcrest began the initial stage of the accelerated schools process, the Alamo Heights District began focusing on a less top-down style of management and more on a bottom-up, teacher empowered style of management. This shift from the traditional mode to a more participatory mode coincides with the moderate quatrain on the left side of the continuum.

Status of Schools at the Time of the Site Visit

There was little variation in the role of central office at the time of the site visit. The teachers and principals interviewed at Griswald and McBride Schools indicated that the relationship between the central office and their respective schools was status quo at the time of the site visits. Thus, the quatrain position of these two schools remained the same. No actions had been taken by either school to facilitate a change in the role of the central office. None of the teachers or the principals mentioned requesting any assistance from members of the central office.

The association with the central office and Forest School also remained status quo at the time of the site visit. The quatrain position of Forest School remained in the same position on the continuum. The school did not experience any additional flexibility in making decisions concerning curriculum and instruction than before the accelerated schools model was implemented.

The Alamo Heights Independent School District was in the process of decentralizing. Schools within the district were encouraged to adopt the Effective Schools concept. Even though the central office demonstrated a more flexible attitude toward site-based decision making, the Cedarcrest faculty (and especially the Principal, Allison Agnew) experienced resentment of and resistance toward the grass roots level changes being made at the school. The teachers at Cedarcrest were able to improve the relationship with the central office because they were "...so high on the change" as Victoria Montgomery explained. The teachers interviewed explained that they would "...petition the Board if we want to change something or do something different." The Superintendent became a frequent visitor and attended the party held to celebrate the rise in the test score results.

When the teachers at Cedarcrest would encounter members of the School Board of central office personnel at social events or local stores, they took the opportunity to discuss the changes that were taking place at the school. The teachers "kept insisting" until members of the School Board came to Cedarcrest to observe the change process firsthand. Those visits, as Victoria Montgomery noted, "...helped us get our foot in the door to go against policies. We got Board support and that helped a lot." Allison Agnew, the Principal, stated that the support of the School Board and the central office had allowed Cedarcrest enough flexibility that, "...we have never broken a rule of school policy but we have bent everyone of them. [And the district office learned to] look

the other way." This attitude correlated with the characteristics of the number three or neutral quatrain on the continuum.

Table 1 depicts the change in the role of the central office from before the accelerated schools process (bracketed "1") and at the time of the site visits (bracketed "2"). The implementation of the accelerated schools process created a change in one of the schools within the context of the role of central office. In the case of Cedarcrest, the results of the interviews and the observations indicated a positive change in the role of central office--from the moderate quatrain on the left side of the continuum to the neutral quatrain of the continuum.

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Factors that Influenced Change

There was evidence from the case studies that five factors combined to influence--facilitate or inhibit--change in the role of central office in the schools. The summary analysis of these factors, presented below, is based on an in depth analysis of each of these factors (Davidson, 1992).

First, the principals, and their capacity to change their leadership styles, was probably the most important single factor in changing the role of teachers. Two of the schools had new principals who initiated the process. Griswald, which changed the least, had a principal with an authoritarian approach, who seemed unable to change his style, even with coaching from university

faculty who provided technical assistance. Teachers consistently indicated that his controlling approach and his temper prevented them from taking risks. Cedarcrest, which exhibited the most change in the role of teachers, also had a new principal who initiated the process. However, Allison Agnew, seemed to have a deep personal commitment to teacher empowerment, which was recognized by her teachers. She was a catalyst, but the teachers themselves initiated changes in their roles.

The other two schools had long-term principals who had previously functioned in authoritarian systems. Thus, both needed to change their styles. At Forest, Marilyn Hasie found this a difficult transition and some of the teachers harbored doubts. However, she did make some changes during the year. In contrast, at McBride, Ruth Oliver had been looking for an opportunity to change the school and readily embraced accelerated schools concepts.

Thus, the style of the principal seems critical. But it is not necessary to assign a new principal to a school, if a principal is willing to make a change. However, it is difficult to judge whether a principal is really willing, or just says (s)he is willing to make a change. Griswald School was selected for the accelerated schools project because the principal appeared to be very supportive of these principles. However, teachers indicated he did not have an empowering approach to the project.

Second, the role of the teacher changed, in varying degrees, in three of the four schools due to the implementation of the

accelerated schools process. At Forest, McBride, and Cedarcrest the change process had a positive effect. The role of the teacher did not change at Griswald.

The autocratic leadership style of the Principal that preceded Allison Agnew, and the absence of decision making opportunities, demoralized the teachers at Cedarcrest to the point that the faculty turn over was at an all time high. Through the accelerated schools process and under the leadership of Allison Agnew, "...teacher empowerment was like automatic." Each interviewee noted that, "...being treated as professionals" had stimulated the faculty to assume leadership roles, to explore creative ways to improve the curriculum, and to utilize their talents to the fullest.

At Griswald the role of the teacher did not change, While teachers were doing different things in the classroom, their role in the school did not change. The teachers entered the process optimistic about being involved in decision making processes. William Brewer's inability to build an element of trust and mutual respect turned the enthusiasm into apathy. As one teacher explained, "And I don't think there's been much teacher empowerment. Not what I expected out of the program."

Third, a relationship between change in pedagogy and change in the role of teachers was also evident, although it was not a simple, one-directional relationship. Of the three first year schools, Griswald exhibited the most immediate curricular change at the time of the site visits. Teachers were using math

manipulatives and the whole language approach. However, it also appears that these ideas had been promoted by the principal, not the teachers.

Neither Forest nor McBride exhibited much change in curriculum in 1990-1991. However, at McBride, teachers were actively involved in planning for curricular changes--a writers workshop and an Afro-centric curriculum--were implemented in 1991-1992. And McBride gained national recognition for these innovations during the 1991-1992 school year. In fact, the school became a show place for other schools considering the accelerated schools process.

At Cedarcrest, there was substantial evidence of curricular change. There was evidence of team teaching, thematic education, and a variety of other innovations that had already resulted in large test score gains. Thus, the two schools that had the most evidence of an empowering environment--McBride and Cedarcrest--were best able to make meaningful changes in pedagogical processes.

Finally, technical assistance from university faculty played a minor role in the change process in three of the schools. Cedarcrest initiated its accelerated schools process without assistance from university consultants. After its success with test score improvements, accelerated schools specialists at a local university learned about the school, visited the school, and thus, Cedarcrest illustrates that schools can restructure without outside help. Faculty at the other three schools were trained in a university-based program and were given technical assistance with the implementation of the process. In interviews, teachers

indicated this university support was helpful. However, the success of the schools was variable. And the university consultants had little influence on the predispositions of the principals. Three principals espoused belief and were open to coaching. However, the one principal who had a less open attitude toward teachers, was also reluctant to use coaching from the university. Therefore, technical assistance by university specialists can help with the transition to the accelerated model, but it does not guarantee success.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This initial study of the implementation of the accelerated schools process in a select group of schools illustrates that: 1) District movement to site-based management policies can help foster the accelerated schools process, and 2) in contrast, the absence of this site-based management policy does not necessarily inhibit the process, if the central office neglects the school and/or the principal ignores central office mandates.

First, central offices had a minor influence on the restructuring. Two of the schools--McBride and Griswald--were in a large urban district that had not yet made a commitment to moving toward site-based management in 1990-1991. The Principal at McBride, who had been in her role for 11 years at the time of the site visit, used the accelerated schools process to distance her school from district policies. She used the process as an excuse for going her own way. In contrast, the Principal of Griswald had previously been curriculum specialist with the central office and

was new to the school. He used the accelerated schools process as an opportunity to push many of his curricular ideas, which were consistent with district policies.

The other two schools--Forest and Cedarcrest--were in districts that had moved toward site-based management. Forest decided to initiate the accelerated schools model as part of its site-based management process. At Cedarcrest, the school experienced little central office resistance to the process, but received no central office support.

School restructuring also appears to be an important aspect of the change process. Districts that have "shifted the initiative...from school boards, superintendents, and central administrative offices to individual schools" (Hill, et al., 1992, p. 21) have fewer obstacles to implementing the accelerated schools process. As David (1989) notes, "...without autonomy, shared decision making has little meaning" (p. 46). However, a district orientation toward school restructuring, by itself, does not explain why one school changes and another does not.

Once the central office becomes part of the accelerated schools transformation process, they are more likely to become partners in helping accelerated schools achieve their goals, rather than regulators of compliance standards. Hill, et al. (1992) explain that, "It's up to school boards to help schools become strong, competent organizations, not clones of a central model or products of external regulation" (p. 25).

Further, universities can provide training and technical assistance which help facilitate the empowerment process. However, other forces in schools can inhibit change, even if university assistance is provided. And there is no guarantee that university facilitators have the personal skills and knowledge that can actually help schools with this difficult change process. The craft of facilitating school restructuring needs to be refined, both by school leaders and outside facilitators, including university faculty. Thus, there is a clear need for continued inquiry into how change in leadership can best be fostered.

Table 1

Assessing the Extent of Change in the Role of Central Office

Primarily top-down control and regulation				Exchange of information and school-based decision making
Extreme	Moderate	Neutral	Moderate	Extreme
Griswald (1), (2)				
McBride (1), (2)				
		Forest (1), (2)		
	Cedarcrest (1)	Cedarcrest (2)		
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